

Madness in Twentieth-Century French Women's Writing

Leduc, Duras, Beauvoir, Cardinal, Hyvrard

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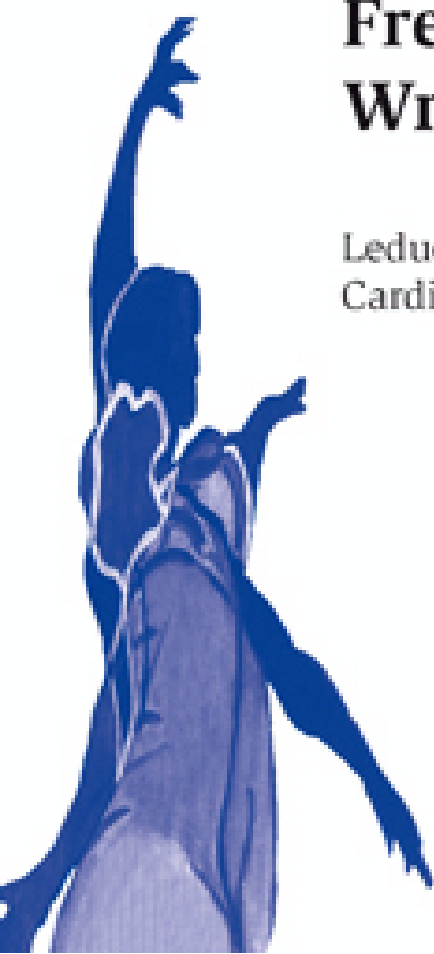
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Peter Lang



Introduction

J'ai longtemps hésité à écrire un livre sur la femme. Le sujet est irritant, surtout pour les femmes; et il n'est pas neuf. La querelle du féminisme a fait couler assez d'encre, à présent elle est à peu près close: n'en parlons plus. On en parle encore cependant.¹

These are the opening sentences to *Le Deuxième Sexe*, first published in 1949. Beauvoir's hesitancy in writing what she called her 'book about women' is in marked contrast to the confidence of Michel Foucault's opening lines to his book about madness:

Il faut faire l'histoire de cet autre tour de folie – de cet autre tour de folie par lequel les hommes, dans le geste de raison souveraine qui enferme leur voisin, communiquent et se reconnaissent à travers le langage sans merci de la non-folie²

Foucault's text having first been published in 1961, it is in the later, 1972, edition that it finds a much wider audience, particularly among women. Two years later, Phyllis Chesler begins her study, *Women and Madness*, with both a Foucauldian confidence and a confidently Foucauldian definition of madness as: 'that divinely menacing behaviour from whose eloquence and exhausting demands society protects itself through "reason" and "force"'.³ Applying this insight to the question of *women* and madness, however, she grows more circumspect:

- 1 Simone de Beauvoir, *Le Deuxième Sexe*, Folio edn, 2 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 2004), p. 13.
- 2 Michel Foucault, 'Préface', *Folie et déraison. Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* (Paris: Plon, 1961), pp. i–xi, reprinted in Michel Foucault, *Dits et écrits*, 2 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), I, pp. 187–195, p. 187.
- 3 Phyllis Chesler, *Women and Madness* (London: Allen Lane, 1974), p. xviii.

It has never been my intention to romanticize madness, or to confuse it with political or cultural revolution [...] Most weeping, depressed women, most anxious and terrified women are neither about to seize the means of production and reproduction, nor are they any more creatively involved with problems of cosmic powerlessness, evil and love than is the rest of the human race.⁴

In 1978, in her *La Folie et la chose littéraire*, another woman writer, Shoshana Felman, turns to the relationship between madness and writing. Felman begins, like Beauvoir, with an address to her readers' possible fatigue at the subject matter:

On connaît l'importance, et l'enjeu, de la question de la folie dans le champ culturel contemporain, où la folie non seulement préoccupe, mais fait converger plusieurs disciplines. [...] Si la question de la folie s'est avérée aujourd'hui une des questions les plus subversives, certains regrettent cependant qu'elle soit devenue à ce point sensationnelle, en même temps que banale.⁵

The question of woman was already not new for Simone de Beauvoir in the late 1940s, but over the thirty years following publication of *Le Deuxième Sexe* it became one of *the* questions of the time. Over the course of the 1960s and 70s, the question of madness, largely due to Michel Foucault's intervention in *Histoire de la folie*, equally became a major preoccupation of French intellectual enquiry – to the point, by the late 1970s, of having become a tired one, just as certain female theorists are coming to fill in the gaps left by Foucault's study in thinking about the relationship between women and madness. As for the relationship between women and writing, Simone de Beauvoir herself poses it in 1949, but it was not until the post-1968 explosion of women's writing and feminist literary criticism that the question of woman was to be widely taken up, and only then in very different ways. By the mid 1970s it is Beauvoir herself – her kind of writing, her kind of feminism – who is coming to be thought of, by some feminists at least, as tired, with *écriture féminine* now setting the agenda for feminist discussions of the subject. Indeed, *féminine* or otherwise,

4 Ibid., p. xxi.

5 Shoshana Felman, *La Folie et la chose littéraire* (Paris: Seuil, 1978), p. 11.

écriture is itself a question that takes centre stage over the period during which the authors to be discussed here are writing, and certain notions once associated with literary activity – intentionality, stable signification, the authority of the author – that come also to be thought as tired.⁶ Over the time that the writers that form the subject of this book accede to authorship, the author is pronounced ‘dead’.⁷

In 2009 neither the questions of madness, women and writing, nor that of the relationships that might be established between them, are new. If ‘*[o]n en parle encore cependant*’, it is because the writers being considered here – Violette Leduc, Simone de Beauvoir, Marguerite Duras, Marie Cardinal and Jeanne Hyvrard – are all French women who write about madness over a period when all three key terms of the title of this book are being subjected to a radical re-thinking, with much of this scholarship being authored both by women, and in France. The hesitancy and defensiveness expressed by women such as Beauvoir, Chesler and Felman about their writing, however, is as much the subject of this book as are those three key terms themselves. This is a book about women authors who write about madness in twentieth-century France and their defensiveness, or rather the defensive strategies taken up in their texts. This book poses the question of about what, exactly, a woman author might be defensive when she is writing in France between 1946 and 1976, and of why madness, or rather the figure of the madwoman, should feature so prominently in female-authored texts of the time.

6 Roland Barthes, *Le Degré zéro de l'écriture* (Paris: Seuil, 1972), p. 11.

7 Roland Barthes, ‘La Mort de l’auteur’ [1968] in *Le Bruissement de la langue* (Paris: Seuil, 1984), pp. 64–69, p. 69.

Madness and Writing

Long before either Michel Foucault's or Shoshana Felman's work on madness, there has been a persistent notion within Western culture that madness and literary creativity might be intrinsically linked. In Plato's *Phaedrus* there is already the idea that a specific kind of madness – 'the madness of the Muses' – is the condition of possibility of poetic production, for which mere technical competence is no substitute.⁸ The idea endures into the twentieth-century, where, within *Les Manifestes du surréalisme*, André Breton asks whether madness might be a means to access an experience of *jouissance* usually confined to the asylum, but which is itself fertile ground for creative inspiration.⁹

Michel Foucault's work on madness is in many ways an extension of this same writing tradition in its consideration of the extent to which the act of writing about madness (his own, that of the authors he considers) might in itself be an act of subversion. *Histoire de la folie*'s major contribution to twentieth-century thinking on madness has been its resignification of madness from mental illness to *déraison*, or the position occupied within Western metaphysical and clinical discourses by the Other of an oppressive, sovereign reason. The literary, however, retains within Foucault's study an exceptional status as one discourse not engaged in the historical repression of madness.

- 8 '[...] if a man comes to the doors of poetry untouched by the madness of the Muses, believing that technique alone will make him a good poet, he and his sane compositions never reach perfection, but are utterly eclipsed by the performances of the inspired madman.' Plato, 'Phaedrus', in *Phaedrus and Letters VII and VIII*, trans. Walter Hamilton (London: Penguin Classics, 1973), pp. 19–103, p. 48.
- 9 'Reste la folie, la "folie qu'on enferme" a-t-on si bien dit. Celle-là ou l'autre [...] Que [les fous] soient, dans une mesure quelconque, victimes de leur imagination, je suis prêt à l'accorder, en ce sens qu'elle pousse à l'inobservance de certaines règles [...] Et, de fait, les hallucinations, les illusions, etc., ne sont pas une source de jouissance négligeable.' André Breton, *Les Manifestes du surréalisme*, Folio edn., (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), p. 15.

One of Foucault's most quoted findings concerning madness and literature is his re-definition of madness as the 'absence d'oeuvre'.¹⁰ By this Foucault understands that the historical exclusion of madness from the logos constitutes a reduction of the discourse of the *fou* to a kind of absence or error, a negation of the values of integrity and full presence of the speaking subject that inform notions of authorship within a culture still dominated by Enlightenment, humanist thought:

la folie ne manifeste ni ne raconte la naissance d'une oeuvre [...]; elle désigne la forme vide d'où vient cette oeuvre, c'est-à-dire le lieu d'où elle ne cesse d'être absente, où jamais on ne la retrouvera parce qu'elle ne s'y est jamais trouvée. Là en cette région pâle, sous cette cache essentielle, se dévoile l'incompatibilité gémellaire de l'oeuvre et de la folie¹¹

If Foucault presents madness as 'l'absence d'oeuvre', though, he persistently returns to the idea that the authentic voice of what he terms 'déraison', otherwise repressed by the end of the eighteenth century by the hegemony of Cartesian reason, effects its return in the form of avant-garde literary and philosophical works such as those of Hölderlin, Nerval, Nietzsche and Artaud.¹² These authors' works, Foucault suggests, contain within them the very same effacement of authorial subjectivity that he finds to be the defining characteristic of madness within logocentric culture. Madness, or rather *déraison*, thus has the status of a privileged subversive force within Foucault's study, such that if literary authors are to contest metaphysical notions of subjectivity from within their writ-

10 Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*, p. 190.

11 Michel Foucault, 'La Folie, l'absence d'oeuvre', in *Dits et écrits*, 2 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), I, pp. 440–448, p. 447.

12 'Depuis la fin du XVIII siècle, la vie de la déraison ne se manifeste plus que dans la fulguration d'oeuvres comme celles de Hölderlin, de Nerval, de Nietzsche ou d'Artaud – indéfiniment irréductibles à ces aliénations qui guérissent, résistant par leur force propre à ce gigantesque emprisonnement morale, qu'on a l'habitude d'appeler, par antiphrase sans doute, la libération des aliénés par Pinel et par Tuke.' *Histoire de la folie*, p. 632.

ing, then one way in which they might do so is by speaking from the position of the *fou*.

Shoshana Felman, in her *La Folie et la chose littéraire* (1978) makes a significant advance on Foucault's peripheral reflections on the relationship between writing and madness. Foucault is often taken to task for the excessively negative account of power offered in his early work in general, and particularly in *Histoire de la folie*.¹³ This 'univocally oppressive' model of power, he himself later acknowledges in interview, fails to offer an adequate account of agency and resistance:

When I wrote *Madness and Civilization* [...] I think indeed that I was positing the existence of a sort of living, voluble and anxious madness which the mechanisms of power and psychiatry were supposed to have come to repress and reduce to silence. But it seems to me now that the notion of repression is quite inadequate for capturing what is precisely the productive aspect of power.¹⁴

Foucault's treatment of the literary in *Histoire de la folie* is one area that suffers particularly from this etiolated account of agency, since Foucault never fully explains how and why the literary authors he mentions manage to escape the repression of *déraison* that he posits as fully effective in other spheres. Felman, in turning to contemporary theories of the nature of textuality (to which, of course, Foucault was later a contributor), fills this gap.

Felman is speaking after Foucault, and thus at a time when his notion of madness as *déraison* has found a degree of acceptance that has made of it all but a commonplace. Felman thus asks after the implications the ubiquity of the notion might have for the way we position madness relative to intellectual discourses, and ourselves as speakers/writers relative

13 'Foucault's negative view of rationality as a univocally oppressive system arises in part from the rather underdeveloped theory of power with which he worked at the time. The spatial model of confinement and exclusion is extended to a theory of power as always negative and repressive in its effects.' Lois McNay, *Foucault: A Critical Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity, 1994), p. 14.

14 Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–77*, ed. by Colin Gordon (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980), pp. 118–119.

to madness. Indeed, if everyone is talking about it by the late 1970s, to what extent may one still speak of madness as Other, the radical *outside* of the twentieth-century 'I'?:

Une folie devenue *lieu commun* signifie qu'on ne peut plus, désormais, penser la folie comme un simple *lieu* à l'intérieur de notre époque; c'est plutôt l'époque toute entière qui se perçoit confusément comme un *lieu* à l'intérieur même de la folie. Un discours qui traite la folie ne peut plus savoir, désormais, s'il est dedans ou dehors, intérieur ou extérieur à la folie dont il parle.¹⁵ [author's italics]

The radical questioning to which the twentieth-century preoccupation with the question of unreason subjects the notion of madness as the 'outside' of culture leads Felman to question in turn whether the subject/object positions in discourses of/on madness might not in fact be more imbricated in one another than is conventionally thought: Is it ever possible, she asks, to speak *on* madness without one's own discourse being infected by the very unreason that one takes as one's object? Is it, conversely, ever possible (as Foucault attempts to do) to 'parler la folie' without oneself becoming complicit in the exclusion of madness one is attempting thereby to subvert? If literature and madness both are endowed with the kind of privileged subversive force that Foucault suggests, might this not in fact be because writing itself is by its nature riven by the very same forces of instability, difference/*différance*, and undecidability that the logos also associates with madness? If this is so, as contemporary thinking on the nature of *écriture* would suggest, then perhaps writing may be thought as the site of reason and unreason's unintended meeting:

Or, puisqu'il n'y a pas de métalangage, écrire *sur* la folie et écrire la folie, parler *sur* la folie et parler la folie ne se rencontrent-ils pas quelque part? Quelque part où ils ne se donnent *pas* rendez-vous? Ne serait-il pas dans ce quelque part, justement, que pourrait se situer l'*écriture*?¹⁶

15 Shoshana Felman, op. cit., p. 13.

16 Ibid., p. 14.

Felman goes on to suggest that literature and madness have a common history of repression, to the extent that both are conceived as subversive, unbiddable, ungraspable phenomena to be cured, brought to heel, explained and explained away by critical discourses such as psychoanalysis, philosophy and, all too often, literary criticism. This being the case, the question must be raised of to what extent, when a literary text speaks of madness, this speaking-of/on-madness might be a means for the literary text to speak of itself:

Je tâcherai donc d'analyser, avant tout, les structures et les modes même du refoulement à l'intérieur du langage littéraire. La dénégation portant sur la folie, aussi bien que sur la littérature, comment fonctionne-t-elle? Comment fonctionne-t-elle, non pas seulement au-dehors, mais bien au-dedans du texte? Quelles sont, à l'intérieur même du texte, les structures de la méconnaissance – et de sa propre méconnaissance?¹⁷

Foucault's *Histoire de la folie* suggests that speaking from the position of the madman might be the literary author's only recourse if he is to subvert the structures of repression inherent in logocentric culture; Shoshana Felman asks instead whether writing might always speak of its own irreducible relationship to madness by virtue of the fact that any of the structures of repression of unreason that an author might attempt to inscribe within literature will always be vulnerable to subversion by the text's capacity to contain its own internal critique of itself. It is by deploying such critical concepts that Felman is able to produce her reading of Balzac's short story, 'Adieu', for example, as a subversion of the logic of representation of madness (as radically Other, and therefore to be cured) that it seems to endorse:

La littérature semble dire, de la sorte, son impuissance à récupérer la folie du signifiant qui la parle, son impuissance radicale à faire sens: à 'apprivoiser' sa propre répétition différentielle, à représenter une identité, à nommer une vérité, à maîtriser, comprendre, articuler ou thématiser sa différence signifiante.¹⁸

17 Ibid., p. 16.

18 Ibid., p. 153.

What the following discussion takes from Felman's approach in *La Folie et la chose littéraire* is an attention to the notion of repression of madness from within a literary text. The readings offered here ask whether, as Foucault's analysis would suggest, the literary text furnishes the author with the means successfully to subvert a form of repressive power, by speaking from within the discourse of madness (through, for example, a mad female narrator). Or, on the contrary, do the literary authors considered here, like those male authors writing in the nineteenth century that form the corpus of *La Folie et la chose littéraire*, strive (and inevitably fail) to defend themselves against a madness which is, as Felman, writing in the late 1970s, argues, finally a constitutive element of *écriture*? Consideration will also be offered of the additional difference it might make that Leduc, Beauvoir, Duras, Cardinal and Hyvrard are all writing in a period when Felman's understanding of *écriture* is coming to be formed, and that all the texts for consideration here are written by women, who, over the period in which they are writing, are coming to be thought of as the other Others both of reason and of literary discourse. As Foucault himself famously asked, 'Qu'importe qui parle?'.¹⁹

Women and Madness

In the wake of the republication of Foucault's *Histoire de la folie* in 1972, several feminist theorists, both in France and in the Anglo-American academy, begin to publish texts that consider the specific relationship between women and madness. These studies are both significantly influenced by Foucault's idea of madness as 'déraison' even as they present themselves as a critique of Foucault in his failure to take sufficient account of gender in his treatment of the repression and confinement of the *fous*.

19 Michel Foucault, 'Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?', in *Dits et écrits*, 2 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), I, pp. 817–849, p. 817.

The two most influential of these studies are Phyllis Chesler's *Women and Madness*, and Elaine Showalter's *The Female Malady*,²⁰ first published in 1974 and 1985 respectively.²¹ Chesler's focus is on reporting the testimonies of female psychiatric and mental health patients. She produces an analysis of the extent to which, in contemporary Western society, women account for far greater numbers than men of those drawing on mental health services, and how far the norms of mental health differ according to the sex of the patient. Asking whether such observations might call for a definition of madness as in some sense a specifically 'female malady', Chesler answers with a qualified affirmative. She argues that mental health norms are implicitly gendered as masculine within patriarchal culture, such that femininity is marked as in some sense always-already pathological:

Since clinicians and researchers, as well as their patients and subjects, adhere to a masculine standard of mental health, women, by definition, are viewed as psychologically impaired – whether they accept or reject the female role – simply because they are women.²²

Chesler and Showalter both address the question of mental dis-ease as in some sense always gendered as feminine in the modern period, partly due to a more general tendency within patriarchy to view the feminine as a psychically as well as corporeally impoverished variant of the masculine norm, partly due to the fact that women's refusal to conform to sex-role stereotypes has so frequently been treated as psychiatric disorder. Showalter writes of the nineteenth century:

20 Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830–1980* (London: Virago, 1987).

21 For later considerations of the subject, see also Angela Simms, *Women and Madness* (London: MAD Press, 1992); Jane Ussher, *Women's Madness: Misogyny or Mental Illness?* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991).

22 Chesler, op. cit., p. 108.

In a society that not only perceived women as childlike, irrational, and sexually unstable but also rendered them legally powerless and economically marginal, it is not surprising that they should have formed the greater part of the residual categories of deviance from which doctors drew a lucrative practice and the asylums much of their population.²³

There is, however, in all of these feminist studies of the relationship between women and madness authored during the 1970s, a residual tension never fully resolved between an attraction to the notion of madness as a woman's ill on the one hand, and an awareness, on the other, that such a claim risks positing an essential link between women and madness, to the point of simply reproducing the familiar patriarchal association of femininity with insanity. This anxiety is one that is articulated with reference to the question of agency.

On the one hand, Phyllis Chesler asks whether the notion of female madness as mental illness might itself simply be an instrument of patriarchal coercion. Those women labelled 'mad' within patriarchal culture might, then, simply be engaged in an attempt to recuperate an ideal experience of female intersubjectivity now suppressed by the phallogocentric othering of women: 'Perhaps the angry and weeping women in mental asylums are Amazons returned to earth these many centuries later, each conducting a private and half-remembered search for the motherland – a search we call madness.'²⁴ But Chesler equally expresses reservations about the possibilities for feminist social change predicated on the idea of madness as protest. 'Neither genuinely mad women, nor women who are hospitalized for conditioned female behaviour are powerful revolutionaries.'²⁵ Elaine Showalter likewise urges caution if any feminist should feel herself drawn into viewing female mental disorder as contestation:

23 Showalter, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

24 Chesler, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

25 *Ibid.*, p. 53.

A serious study of the female malady should not romanticize madness as one of women's wrongs any more than it should accept an essentialist equation of femininity with insanity. Rather, it must investigate how, in a particular cultural context, notions of gender influence the definition, and, consequently, the treatment of mental disorder.²⁶

This notion of female madness as feminist protest, even as it is often prefaced by cautious references to the risk of essentialism, has been a powerful one in both literary and philosophical treatments of women and madness, and which has gained much ground within feminist critiques of Freudian psychoanalysis, and in particular the 'Dora' case.²⁷ In France, attention to the idea of hysteria as feminist protest clusters around the mid- to late 1970s and women authors associated with the *écriture féminine* project. Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément's *La Jeune née* is, to a large extent, a dialogue that turns around what feminists might make of Dora, and is riven by the tension between essentialism and the crucial question of agency.

Catherine Clément, in her opening section of the text, subtitled 'La Coupable', discusses the ways in which the female hysteric emerges from a feminist reading of Freud's case histories as mocking the corporeal standards of behaviour prescribed for women by patriarchy through her symptoms of spectacular suffering:

La sorcière, l'hystérique, montrent la fête dans leur corps, accomplissant les retournements impossibles, donnant à voir le non-représentable, figures de l'inversion. [...] Avoir mal à la tête, se balancer comme les petites filles ou les araignées pendues au bout de leur fil, faire les pieds au mur, c'est se déjouer de l'ordre symbolique, le renverser: c'est la fête.²⁸

26 Showalter, op. cit., p. 5.

27 Sigmund Freud, 'Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria', in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and ed. by James Strachey, 24 vols (London: Hogarth Press, 1953–1974), VII, pp. 1–122.

28 Catherine Clément, 'La Coupable', in Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément, *La Jeune née* (Paris: 10/18, 1975), pp. 9–112.

At times, Cixous seems the more circumspect, acknowledging the possibility that to see the madwoman as feminist heroine might be little more than an appealing metaphor, with limited political force:

Je suis entrée dans le cercle de l'hystérie parce que j'y étais attirée, appelée. [...] J'ai lu 'le cas Dora', je ne m'y voyais pas, entrer, puis j'ai fait un immense chemin là-dedans. [...] Je suis arrivée à toute une série de positions; une partie de ces positions est peut-être contestable. Impossible de conceptualiser ça de façon inébranlable. Mais si ça n'est qu'une métaphore, ce qui n'est pas sûr, ça fonctionne bien, ça a son efficacité.²⁹

But in later discussion, Cixous emerges as the one emphasising Dora's subversiveness:

H: [...] Dora a cassé quelque chose.

C: Je ne crois pas.

H: Les maisons qui 'demeuraient' sur elle, dont la stabilité était assurée par elle

C: Ce qu'elle a cassé était strictement individuel et limité.

H: Parce qu'à l'époque c'était impossible d'aller plus loin.

C: Écoute, tu aimes bien Dora, mais à moi, elle ne m'est jamais apparue comme un personnage révolutionnaire.

H: Je me fous de Dora, je ne la fétichise pas. Elle est le nom d'une certaine force dérangeante, qui fait que le petit cirque ne marche plus.³⁰

This dialogue between Cixous and Clément is emblematic of the wider sense of unease within feminist discourses on female madness that ties in with the questions raised by a feminist re-reading of Foucault's *Histoire de la folie*. Feminists have often been drawn into taking up Foucault's notion of *déraison*, finding it to be perhaps doubly applicable to women who, like Foucault's madmen, also occupy the position of the Other of the logos, though in this instance on grounds of their sex (as Simone de Beauvoir argued in *Le Deuxième Sexe* in 1949).³¹ On this read-

29 Hélène Cixous, 'L'Intenable', in op. cit., pp. 268–296, p. 271.

30 Ibid., p. 289.

31 '[La femme] se détermine et se différencie par rapport à l'homme et non celui-ci par rapport à elle; elle est l'inessentiel en face de l'essentiel. Il est le Sujet, il est l'Absolu: elle est l'Autre.' Beauvoir, *Le Deuxième Sexe*, I, p. 17.

ing of *Histoire de la folie*, the madwoman or hysteric might offer herself up for feminist analyses as engaged in a similar form of protest against the oppressive structures of Cartesian reason as Foucault's *fous*.

But, as we have seen, Shoshana Felman's *La Folie et la chose littéraire* offers a challenge to such a reading of the role of madness in literature. On her construal, the literary text, of necessity, when speaking of madness is also speaking of itself, or rather of the impossibility of curing a kind of 'madness' (textual indecidability) which is, by the time she is writing, thought of as a defining characteristic of textuality. Felman's nineteenth century, male authors are rather acknowledging, by their speaking-of/on-madness, the insurmountable resistance of the literary text to attempts to 'cure' it of its polysemic aspect. Indeed, her authors (Balzac in particular), in attempting to emplot within their texts the repression of madness, simply attest to their irreducible relationship to it.

When applied to the twentieth-century authors considered here, such a reading might predict that these literary texts, far from embracing or endorsing a madness perceived by the authors as having some essential relationship to the femininity of their madwomen characters, might in fact be structuring its repression. The differentiating factor here is the gender of the authors. If there is an anxiety within feminist treatments of the subject about the loss of agency that the madness-as-feminist-protest view might entail, might not this same anxiety produce a similar attempt at repression of madness from within the female-authored literary text? Indeed, one of the ways in which women have been historically kept from acceding to the status of literary author is through an allegation of deviancy that is often, as Gilbert and Gubar's analysis in *The Madwoman in the Attic* shows, articulated with references to monstrosity or insanity. Far from embracing insanity by speaking from the position of the mad female narrator, might women be *all the more* anxious to repress madness from within their texts, than are Foucault's, or indeed Felman's, canonical male authors?